



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1301.0 - Year Book Australia, 1985

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 01/01/1985

*This page was updated on 23 Nov 2012 to include the disclaimer below. No other content in this article was affected.*

### **DISCLAIMER:**

*Users are warned that historic issues of this publication may contain language or views which, reflecting the authors' attitudes or that of the period in which the item was written, may be considered to be inappropriate or offensive today.*

## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH

This article has been prepared from material provided by the Office of Youth Affairs.

In 1978 the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council adopted numerous resolutions on the position of youth in the world. One was that an international youth year could serve to mobilise efforts to improve the quality of life for young people. After consultation with its members, the UN designated 1985 as International Youth Year (IYY).

The United Nations defines youth as those aged 15 to 24. In Australia young people aged from 12-25 (2.5 million youths: 22 per cent of the population) became the target of IYY, with focus on those aged 14 to 18.

The UN themes for IYY are participation, development and peace, and these themes were considered apt for Australia. For example:

- Participation refers to the need for young people to help make the decisions which affect them. In Australia, for example, there is the recent development of Student Representative Councils at most secondary schools which allows young people to participate in the decisions affecting their education.
- Development encompasses the right of all young people to develop to their highest potential, which might include involvement with local institutions where they could develop the personal skills needed to create their future - indeed the slogan adopted for IYY in Australia is 'creating tomorrow today'.
- Peace includes such issues as disarmament and tolerance, issues with which young people have become more involved during the last ten years. Youthful intolerance of race or ethnic origin still persists, however, and every attempt is being made during IYY for young people to teach others within their peer group that tolerance is just as important an element of peace as is a move to disarm the world of its nuclear armoury.

In Australia, IYY is viewed as a catalyst to engage young people in all aspects of public life. This means young people have to become involved more easily in decision making processes. It also means increasing the awareness of all Australians to the rights, needs and hopes of the youth of Australia. Steps towards this were achieved through the IYY promotions campaign which built community awareness through advertising and other publicity.

Initial involvement called for established non-government youth organisations such as Youth Affairs Councils to consult with other young people. Additionally, other members of the National IYY Co-ordinating Committee contacted young people through their own areas of responsibility, for example the unions (Australian Council of Trade Unions), employers (Confederation of Australian Industry) and local government (Australian Council of Local Government Associations).

The Commonwealth Government through the Office of Youth Affairs (OYA) is involved in other initiatives, commencing with youth policies and programs affecting young people.

### **Programs affecting the status of young people**

The Commonwealth Government recently completed a major review of youth policies. The results should enhance the delivery of government programs for young people in future years. Several initiatives which will have a long-term effect on the status of Australian youth have already commenced. These are as follows:

- Income support for young people. The Commonwealth Government has stimulated debate on income support provisions for young people with a view to rationalising those provisions and eliminating existing inequities. For example, some student scholarships provide a lower level of financial support than do unemployment benefits.
- Rationalisation of youth worker training. The Commonwealth Government has investigated the provision of in-service and other forms of training for young workers employed in a range of organisations. The review of training will result in recommendations of long term benefit to young people.
- Alternative employment opportunities. Pilot training programs have begun to test the value and acceptability of various options for alternative employment outside the conventional workforce.
- Publication of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Youth Report, 1985, which provides a statistical profile of young people in Australia. It is a useful reference document for organisations and individuals concerned with the status of young people.
- Student participation. OYA and the Commonwealth Schools Commission are fostering the development of student representative councils at secondary schools as a means of involving students in decisions which affect their education. Further, it is expected to increase the relevance of schooling and encourage more students to complete their secondary education.
- Program of assistance to youth organisations. To commemorate International Youth Year funding of \$100,000 has been provided to a variety of organisations.
- The Participation and Equity Program (PEP) is the centrepiece of the Government's policies for youth. PEP began operating at the beginning of 1984. It aims to encourage all young Australians to complete the equivalent of a full secondary education, either in school, in a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college or in some combination of work and education. The achievement of this objective is set for the end of this decade. Over \$145 million has been committed to this program which illustrates its importance to Australia.

The government also increased tertiary education opportunities. In addition to an extra 3,000 places in higher education provided in 1984 over the next triennium, it is intended to allocate another 15,000 places at universities and colleges of advanced education, and with the co-operation of State Governments, an extra 15,000 places in TAFE. There is a need for even more places for intending students.

As a positive step to create temporary jobs in these times of high youth unemployment, OYA

called on the resources available through the Commonwealth Government under its Community Employment Program (CEP). Approval was given for the Department of Education and Youth Affairs to employ 108 people under the CEP for International Youth Year activities. This project received a Commonwealth grant of \$1.8 million and employed participants for an average of 35 weeks in centres around Australia. The project encouraged and assisted specific groups of disadvantaged young people to participate in IYY activities, and attempted to involve young people in youth arts festivals and to develop youth art networks.

Each State and Territory employed an arts project officer and an office assistant, supported by a project co-ordinator and an assistant in each capital city. Thirty-four project officers were allocated for specific projects aimed at target groups of disadvantaged young people. These were identified as young women, young Aboriginals, young people from ethnic backgrounds, young mentally and physically disabled people, and young people from remote and isolated areas. The project officers assisted these groups in establishing and maintaining links with IYY and the youth sector.

In line with the Government's objectives for IYY in Australia, this project laid the foundation for greater participation by disadvantaged and minority groups of young people in 1985 and in future years. Previously some of these young people had felt left out of national planning and decision making, although the voluntary youth sector had started making inroads previously to remedy this.

The next government initiative was to develop a formal national program of activities to give impetus to the year. The national IYY program has five components - three being the IYY themes of participation, development and peace. The fourth is general promotional work including a national advertising and publicity campaign, public relations activity designed to raise community awareness and the promotion of discussions of youth issues. The fifth involves policy development work either related directly to IYY or given a particular significance because of it.

There are three activities under the participation theme. The first is a series of investigations on issues facing particularly disadvantaged groups of young people. The groups were those mentioned in the CEP project. In each case major investigations into these issues involved governments and non-government organisations concerned vitally with the needs of the different groups. Five publications resulting from these investigations will be published at the end of 1985 and will form the basis of further policy development work by the Commonwealth Government. The development of these projects was supported by the major CEP project discussed earlier.

The second activity under the participation theme involves the youth arts. Throughout Australia a number of youth arts festivals are being conducted under State Government support, but promoted and supported nationally by the Commonwealth. It is intended that these culminate in youth arts festivals to be held in a major national arts festival in 1988 Australia's Bicentenary year.

Also within the parameters of this second activity, a series of rock music concerts, seminars and workshops has been organised throughout the country. The purpose is to promote the work of lesser known bands.

A number of other activities were organised also through bodies such as the Special Broadcasting Corporation and through grants which were made to bodies involved in youth arts. In particular, grants made through the Australia Council's Youth Arts Incentive Scheme and an IYY concert was organised with the Australian Youth Orchestra as part of Adelaide's autumn festival.

The third activity involving this theme was to engage young people's participation through radio networks. In November/December 1984 a national radio hotline operated for two to three weeks in every capital city. The purpose was to ask young people how they wished to be involved in

IYY. In many cases the participating radio stations continued or adapted the service into 1985. During the year, these and other radio stations have continued to conduct regular widespread discussions on youth issues.

The development theme of IYY involves a number of activities, undertaken by government departments and authorities and includes the following:

- World Environment Day (June 5) with theme of youth involvement and slogan "You're never too young to care " - Australian Environment Council.
- Youth Arts Incentive Scheme (\$1.17m) - Australia Council.
- National program of training courses (\$6.05m) - Australian Film and Television School.
- Series of 13 half-hour programs directed at youth - Special Broadcasting Service.
- Wayside Chapel to establish national network of Life Education Centres directed towards young people - Grant from Department of Health.
- National dietary study of Australian school children and special drug education programs in 1985-86 - Department of Health.
- National survey of fitness, health and physical performance in schools - Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism.
- Award for design excellence for buildings designed expressly for use by young people and post-occupancy evaluation of a school or similar facility involving students as members of the review team - Department of Housing and Construction.
- Provision of funds under the Grant-in-Aid Scheme and the Migrant Project Subsidy Scheme for work with, and projects for, migrant youth - Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.
- Joint funding with the ABC of a series of six Aboriginal profiles and funding for two plays for national touring, one on youth for youth audiences - Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The fourth component of the national IYY program includes a national promotion campaign to raise community awareness about IYY and about young people and the issues that face them. This involves television and radio advertising and the production of a considerable amount of printed material including a resource action kit to enable both younger and older people to become involved in IYY.

Through its promotional work, the Commonwealth Government sought to enlist the aid of all sectors in the community, particularly the corporate sector, in becoming involved in young people's issues.

Major reviews in the final component of the national IYY program, policy development, included the inquiry into labour market programs, much of which concerned youth employment and training programs and a fundamental review of income support arrangements for young people to be completed in time for the 1985-86 Budget.

Apart from these major reviews other special policy developments have been finalised, including the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program for young people in crisis accommodation, developments under the Community Youth Support Scheme and a review of youth employment services for young ethnic groups conducted by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs.

The aim of the Government in relation to the International Year of Youth is not to control the activities but rather to provide direction. It set the objective of helping young people to bring about long term change and improvement in their lives, just as International Woman's Year and the International Year of Disabled Persons brought real and lasting benefit to special groups in the community.

Young people in 1985 and hopefully into the future will be pursuing their own objectives, bringing their own pressure to bear on government systems to react to what they want, not only within Commonwealth policy making and administration but at the grass roots local community and state levels.

The central objective of IYY '85 is a better future for young people everywhere. The world may witness some tangible evidence of this in the clear connections IYY has with other international years, starting earlier with the Year of the Child, and now, moving in 1986 to the International Year of Peace, remembering peace is an IYY theme. 1987 will be the Year of Shelter focussing on homelessness which has also become a growing problem among young people.

---

This page last updated 23 November 2012

© Commonwealth of Australia

All data and other material produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) constitutes Commonwealth copyright administered by the ABS. The ABS reserves the right to set out the terms and conditions for the use of such material. Unless otherwise noted, all material on this website – except the ABS logo, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and any material protected by a trade mark – is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 Australia licence